

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A device for storing plate-shaped substrates the device comprising:

a plurality of consecutive storage elements stacked in a stacked direction, each of which is ~~provided for~~ storage element accommodating at least one substrate;

a means for depositing a substrate ~~provided for in~~ each of the storage elements;

a tool having a first storage element contact surface and a second storage element contact surface, said first storage element contact surface engaging a first storage element;

a moving means for moving said tool relative to said stacked storage elements, said moving means moving said tool with said first storage element contact surface engaged with said first storage element such that said second storage element contact surface engages a second storage element adjacent said first storage element, whereby said tool divides said plurality of stacked storage elements into an upper stack of storage elements and a lower stack of storage elements, said first storage element being located at a spaced location from said second storage element when said second storage element contact surface contacts said second storage element, said moving means moving said tool with said first storage element contact surface engaged with said first storage element and with said second storage element contact surface engaged with said second storage element such that said second storage element is located at a spaced location from said upper stack of storage elements and said lower stack of said storage elements; and

a stacking area defined by an area of one storage element in contact with another

storage element in a stacked formation associated with each of the storage elements, each stacking area being provided for arranging the respective storage element within a stack of storage elements.

2. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the storage elements ~~can be~~ are stacked directly on one another.

3. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the storage elements ~~can be~~ are handled at their stacking area for producing an increased distance between two consecutive storage elements, ~~as a result of which~~ whereby one of the storage elements is accessible for a deposit or a removal of ~~[[a]]~~ said substrate.

4. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein ~~a relative motion can be carried out between the~~ said moving means moves said tool such that a distance between one storage element and another storage element is ~~two storage elements~~ for producing an increased distance.

5. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the storage elements are embodied ~~as at least approximately~~ self-contained storage rings.

6. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the means

for depositing comprises inwardly and upwardly directed projections for engaging said substrate such that said substrate is deposited, ~~by means of which a substrate can be deposited~~ above a ring section of the storage element.

7. (Previously Presented) A device in accordance with claim 6, wherein the projections have a horizontally directed contact surface.

8. (Previously Presented) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein storage elements arranged on top of one another form an at least laterally enclosed space.

9. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 8, further comprising means for producing clean air, ~~with which~~ such that a clean room atmosphere ~~can be~~ is produced in the enclosed space.

10. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 9, wherein said means for producing clean air creates an overpressure ~~can be produced in an~~ [[the]] interior of the device ~~with the clean room means~~.

11. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 8, further comprising means for discharging a predetermined ~~discharge of a~~ amount of gas from within an interior of the device in an outwards direction.

12. (Previously Presented) A device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising means for increasing stability and/or positioning accuracy of superimposed storage elements.

13. (Previously Presented) A device in accordance with claim 12, further comprising a centering means formed on one of the storage elements, which centering means cooperates with a centering means of a consecutive storage element in the stacked direction for increasing the stability.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim [[14]] 1, wherein the two contact surfaces of the tool are offset against one another in the stacked direction of the storage elements.

16. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim [[14]] 1, wherein a relative mobility of the two contact surfaces is provided.

17. (Currently Amended) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the tool is movable in a plane parallel to surfaces of the ~~disk-shaped~~ substrates.

18. (Currently Amended) A transport container for transporting substrates in a

lockable space, the transport container comprising:

5 a plurality of storage elements stacked consecutively one on top of another to form a
transport storage container structure, each storage element receiving a
substrate can be arranged, the storage elements provide a device each with a plurality of
consecutive storage elements in a stacked direction, each of which is provided for
accommodating at least one substrate; via a substrate depositing means, for depositing a
substrate provided for each of the storage elements and each storage element having a
stacking area defined by one of said storage elements in contact with another storage
10 element in a stacked location; and associated with each of the storage elements, with each
stacking area being provided for arranging the respective storage element within a stack of
storage elements

15 a locking means for sealing said transport storage container structure such that clean
room conditions are maintained in a space of said transport storage container structure
defined by said plurality of storage elements.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for handling a disk-shaped substrate that is
used in the manufacture of semiconductor components, the method comprising: as it is
provided for the manufacture of semiconductor components, whereby;

5 providing for approaching a tool having a first portion with a first contact surface
and a second portion with a second contact surface; which has two contact surfaces, to a
specific storage element within

providing a stack of separatable storage elements;

selecting one of said storage elements for removal from said stack of separatable storage elements to define a selected storage element;

10 moving said stack of separatable storage element such that said tool is positioned in an area adjacent said selected storage element, said tool engaging one of said storage elements located adjacent said selected storage element such that said first contact surface is in contact with said adjacent storage element;

moving said tool with said first contact surface in contact with said adjacent storage
15 element such that said second contact surface engages said selected storage element, said adjacent storage element being located at a spaced location from said selected storage element when said second contact surface engages said selected storage element;

moving said tool with said first contact surface in contact with said adjacent storage
element and with said second contact surface in contact with said selected storage element
20 such that said selected storage element is located at a spaced location from another adjacent storage element, whereby said selected storage element is separated from said stack of separatable storage elements a first relative motion is carried out, the specific storage element is contacted with the first contact surface and an adjacent storage element is contacted with the second contact surface; then a second relative motion is carried out, by
25 means of which the distance between the two storage elements in the stacked-direction is increased by means of the tool.

20. (New) A device in accordance with claim 1, wherein a pitch of said upper stack of storage elements and said lower stack of storage elements is not changed when said tool releases one of said storage elements.

21. (New) A device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a sealing means for pressing one storage element against another storage element such that said storage elements are sealed.

22. (New) A device in accordance with claim 1, further comprising a means for discharging nitrogen into the device.

23. (New) A device in accordance with claim 22, further comprising a cover plate and a lower bottom plate a space in which said plurality of storage elements is located, said sealing means, said cover late, said lower bottom plate and said nitrogen providing clean room conditions within said space.

24. (New) A device in accordance with claim 18, wherein said locking means presses one storage element against another storage element such that said storage elements are sealed.

25. (New) A device in accordance with claim 18, wherein said transport storage

container structure has a cover plate and a lower bottom plate to define a clean room space, said plurality of storage elements being located within said clean room space.

26. (New) A method in accordance with claim 19, wherein said tool separates said stack of separatable storage elements into an upper stack of storage elements and a lower stack of storage elements such that the pitch of said upper stack of storage elements and said lower stack of storage elements is not changed when said tool releases said selected storage element.